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**A Variety of Perspectives: The Role of the Narrator in Selected British
Dystopian Novels**

Rozmanitost hledisek: role vypravěče ve vybraných britských dystopických
románech

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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I declare that the following BA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned, and that this thesis has not been used in the course of other university studies, or in order to acquire the same or another type of diploma.

V Praze dne 16. srpna 2021

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Key Words

Dystopia, narrative situation, focalization, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Kazuo Ishiguro, narrator.

Klíčová slova

Dystopie, narativní situace, fokalizace, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Kazuo Ishiguro, vypravěč.

Abstract

This bachelor thesis focuses on examining the narrative situations in selected British dystopian novels and determining how the specific narrative strategies contribute to the texts' efficiency. The discussed novels are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. The study analyses the narrative situation in every novel separately, concentrating on the role of the narrator and their contribution to the presentation of the dystopian world. The thesis works with Gérard Genette's theory of narrative and his concept of focalization, using his terminology to describe the narrative mode in each of the novels. By examining the role of the narrators in the texts, the present study aims to determine how the chosen narrative techniques augment the depiction of the fictional worlds, thus making the novels more effective and relatable.

Each of the novels was given their individual chapters in order to provide a detailed analysis of the narrative situations and determine how the particular type of narrator influences the way the text is perceived. In the introductory part, the genre of dystopia and its primary purpose are discussed. The chapter also introduces the theoretical framework and the primary texts. The second chapter is dedicated to Huxley's *Brave New World*, analysing it as an authorial novel, where zero focalization creates a significant distance between the reader and the characters, thus highlighting the issue of dehumanization in the novel. The following chapter examines Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the text's internal focalization that, conversely, establishes a close identification with the protagonist. The fourth chapter deals with Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, discussing its considerable subjectivity caused by the autodiegetic narration with internal focalization. By allowing the readers access to the protagonist's perspective and thoughts, the novel emphasizes the immorality of human cloning. The last chapter provides a summary of the

individual conclusions drawn in the preceding chapters and compares the role of the narrators and the effects of the narrative modes in the three novels.

As for the choice of the primary texts, the selection provided is meant to represent canonical works of dystopian literature, as well as to allow analysis of three distinct narrative situations as each of the texts features a different narrative mode. The thesis, therefore, decided to overlook the gap between the novels' publication dates, and their social and historical context to an extent, focusing on their narrative situations instead.

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na zkoumání narativních situací ve vybraných britských dystopických románech a určuje, jakým způsobem konkrétní narativní strategie přispívají k účinnosti textů. Diskutovanými romány jsou *Brave New World* Aldouse Huxleyho, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* George Orwella a *Never Let Me Go* Kazua Ishigura. Práce analyzuje narativní situaci v každém románu zvlášť, přičemž se zaměřuje na roli vypravěče a jejich přínos pro prezentaci dystopického světa. Pracuje s teorií vyprávění Gérarda Genetteho a jeho konceptem fokalizace, přičemž pomocí jeho terminologie popisuje narativní režim v každém z románů. Zkoumáním role vypravěčů ve zmíněných textech si práce klade za cíl zjistit, jak zvolené narativní techniky rozšiřují zobrazení fiktivních světů, čímž přispívají k účinku románů a schopnosti čtenářů se k nim osobně vztáhnout.

Každému z děl je věnována jedna kapitola, aby bylo možné provést podrobnou analýzu narativních situací a určit, jak konkrétní typ vypravěče ovlivňuje způsob vnímání textu. V úvodní části je rozebrán žánr dystopie a její primární účel. Kapitola také představuje teoretický rámec práce a primární texty. Druhá kapitola je věnována Huxleyho románu *Brave New World* a analyzuje dílo jako autorský román, kde nulová fokalizace vytváří značný odstup mezi čtenářem a postavami a zdůrazňuje tak téma odlidštění. Následující kapitola pojednává o Orwellově románu *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a vnitřní fokalizaci textu, která naopak vytváří těsnou identifikaci s protagonistou. Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá Ishigurovým románem *Never Let Me Go* a pojednává o značné subjektivitě textu způsobené autodiegetickým vyprávěním s vnitřní fokalizací. Tím, že umožňuje čtenářům přístup k perspektivě a myšlenkám protagonisty, román zdůrazňuje nemravnost klonování lidí. Poslední kapitola přináší shrnutí jednotlivých závěrů vyvozených v

předchozích kapitolách a porovnává roli vypravěčů a účinky narativních režimů ve třech románech.

Pokud jde o výběr primárních textů, poskytnutý výběr má reprezentovat kanonická díla dystopické literatury a také umožnit analýzu tří odlišných narativních situací, neboť každý z textů volí jiné narativní postupy. Bakalářská práce proto do určité míry záměrně přehlíží rozdíly v datech vydání románů a v jejich sociálním a historickém kontextu a místo toho se zaměřuje na jejich narativní aspekty.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Gregory Clayer has observed: “The word ‘dystopia’ evokes disturbing images.”¹ As a literary genre, dystopias are perhaps most frequently associated with these disturbing images and conceived of as direct opposites of utopias, their inverted, mirrored, or negative versions, “the imaginary bad place as opposed to the imaginary good place.”² However, is a dystopian novel merely a portrayal of some dreadful fictional world? And if so, what is its contribution to literature, besides perhaps daunting the readers? As a matter of fact, in order to sufficiently fathom what lies at the root of the concept of dystopia and appreciate its value, one would need to look further than simply contrasting it with utopia.

Having first appeared in the mid-eighteenth century, the term “dystopia” is derived from two Greek words, *dus* and *topos*, meaning a diseased, bad, faulty, or unfavourable place.³ Dystopia as a literary genre is a relatively modern phenomenon, having flourished in the second half of the twentieth century. For this reason, dystopia is frequently identified with the failure of the twentieth-century totalitarianism, from both literary and historical viewpoints. Nonetheless, according to Clayer’s typology, the political dystopia is merely one of three types of dystopian novels. The remaining two kinds are the environmental dystopia, where humanity faces natural disasters and attempts to survive on desolate planets; and the technological dystopia, where science and technology ultimately threaten to dominate or destroy humanity.⁴ Writers may of course choose different sorts of case scenarios, settings, or ultimate conflicts in their dystopian novels, depending on the problem they wish to address.

¹ Gregory Clayer, *Dystopia: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

² Gregory Clayer, “News from Somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia,” *History* 98, no. 2 (April 2013): 155, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24429650>.

³ Clayer, *Dystopia: A Natural History*, 4.

⁴ Clayer, *Dystopia: A Natural History*, 5.

Regardless of the plot that the writers decide to develop, dystopias are rarely entirely fictional: in fact, they almost always aim to highlight a pressing issue that the author may have observed around them. Such novels normally depict worlds and societies very similar to our own, with the exception of putting a special emphasis on a certain alarming tendency and slightly exaggerating the current situation since the plots are most often set in the future. The outcome is a highly detailed account of what our very own future may be like, unless there is a significant change of the contemporary tendencies, unless people resolve to put an end to those disquieting trends. This is precisely where dystopia's value and contribution may be identified: they are not intended to simply illustrate an imaginary bad place, but rather serve as a warning to governments and individuals alike, revealing what may await them in the near future and thus helping to prevent a possible disaster. Lucy Sargisson has succinctly pinpointed dystopia's social and political significance:

Dystopias matter because they make us think. They help us to imagine and envisage how the present can change into something very nasty. They tell us what's wrong with the now, and they imagine how things could (easily) become much worse. Dystopias identify key themes, trends or issues in the present and extrapolate these, stretching them (sometimes to extremes), before placing them into less familiar contexts for our examination.⁵

Consequently, dystopian novels frequently aim to enlighten their readers, make them aware of serious problems in the world and thus, cause them to alter their actions. Can all dystopian novels succeed in this ambitious activist task, however? That is almost entirely up the authors' writing skills, and also to their employment of specific narrative strategies. This thesis is going to examine three major British dystopian novels from the twentieth and early twenty-first century with focus on the narrative strategies that they employ.

⁵ Lucy Sargisson, "Dystopias Do Matter," in *Dystopia(n) Matters: On the Page, on Screen, on Stage*, ed. Fátima Vieira (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 40.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Narratology is a branch of literary theory that is concerned with the analysis of the narrative situations, forms of narration and types of narrators. Monika Fludernik defines narrative theory as the study of narrative as a genre, whose objective is “to describe the constants, variables and combinations typical of narrative and to clarify how these characteristics of narrative texts connect within the framework of theoretical models (typologies).”⁶ The term was first coined in France in 1969⁷, and narratology emerged in the wake of the combined impact of deconstruction and linguistic pragmatics.⁸ As structuralism accumulated influence, the approach to literary analysis saw a dramatic shift: context was brought back in a variety of manifestations, interest in traditional literary issues was reawakened, thus triggering the so-called “narrative turn.”⁹ Distinguished theorists and critics such as Gérard Genette, Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, and Vladimir Propp, among others, have all made their contributions to systematizing the discipline of narratology and coining the fundamental concepts that are required for the narrative analysis. Gérard Genette has asserted:

A narrating situation is, like any other, a complex whole within which analysis, or simply description, cannot differentiate except by ripping apart a tight web of connections among the narrating act, its protagonists, its spatio-temporal determinations, its relationship to the other narrating situations involved in the same narrative.¹⁰

Genette’s *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* may probably be called the very first comprehensive study that provides a systematic theory of narrative that is indispensable for

⁶ Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London: Routledge, 2009), 8.

⁷ Majid Amerian, “Key Concepts and Basic Notes on Narratology and Narrative,” *Scientific Journal of Review* 4, no. 10 (2015): 182, doi:10.14196/sjr.v4i10.1927.

⁸ Monika Fludernik, “Narratology in the Twenty-First Century: The Cognitive Approach to Narrative,” *PMLA* 125, no. 4 (2010): 924, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41058291>.

⁹ Fludernik, “Narratology in the Twenty-First Century,” 925.

¹⁰ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 215.

understanding narratology. For instance, his differentiation between narration and focalization was a major revision of the theory of point of view.¹¹

Genette's theory of narrative has first introduced a distinction between narration and focalization, arguing that the majority of theorists have failed to distinguish properly between mode and voice, that is to say, between establishing who the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective is, and determining who narrates the story.¹² Therefore, the mode of narration refers to analyzing the narrative perspective, which Genette calls focalization. He also describes three types of focalization: zero focalization, internal focalization, and external focalization. The category of focalization is generally considered to be the most controversial and hotly disputed branch of Genette's typology.¹³ Such theorists like Mieke Bal, and Boris Uspensky, for instance, have presented differing views on types of focalization as the ideological and visual approaches to perspective have become intermingled.¹⁴ However, for clarity's sake, the thesis will use the typology established by Genette.

1.3 Primary Texts and Structure of the Thesis

The present study will, therefore, work with Genette's theory of the narrative and employ the terminology that he introduces in order to analyse the narrative situations in three dystopian novels: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948), and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005). More specifically, the thesis will aim to analyze the roles of the narrator in the above-mentioned texts and identify the different voices that the novels contain. In doing so, it will pinpoint the ways in which distinct types of focalization help to present

¹¹ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 10.

¹² Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 10.

¹³ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 102.

¹⁴ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 103.

the fictional world as comprehensively as possible, contributing to the novels' persuasiveness. By analyzing the narrative situations in the novels, the thesis will attempt to determine whether the chosen narrative techniques are effective in helping the dystopias to fulfill their purpose: to be coherent and convincing enough to leave a deep impression on the readers and contribute to a change of their attitudes.

As for the choice of primary texts, the selection is meant to allow for the analysis of three different narrative situations and of the narrators' impact on the depiction of the fictional worlds. The works of Orwell and Huxley are commonly considered to be two of the most classical and prominent dystopian novels of the twentieth century, whereas Ishiguro's text is an example of an early twenty-first century's dystopia. The selection was made on the basis of the novels' canonical status, and the different narrative situations, thus overlooking the gap between their publication dates, and the social and historical context to an extent. Other outstanding dystopian novels could have been analyzed too, but that would exceed the scope of the thesis.

Nineteen Eighty-Four and *Brave New World* present the reader with entirely different fictional worlds: the former draws a disquieting picture of an oppressed and miserable society that is ruled by a totalitarian government, while the latter is a technological dystopia that deals with human cloning and psychological conditioning of the citizens. In fact, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* tackles the issue of human cloning as well, although the clones in this novel are raised to be organ donors. The selected texts are not only diverse in terms of themes, but they are also utterly different in terms of the narrative situations they present, since each of the writers required specific narrative techniques to best relate the plot and illustrate the fictional societies. Structurally, the thesis is divided into three chapters, each of them discussing the narrative situation in one of the chosen

novels. The chapters are ordered chronologically, according to the original publication date of the primary texts.

Chapter 2 – Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*

2.1 *Brave New World*: Historical Context and General Introduction

Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894–1963) was one of the most prominent British writers of the twentieth century who produced a significant amount of work, including novels, critical essays, poems, and screenplays. Huxley came from a family with a deep intellectual background,¹⁵ his grandfather was the distinguished biologist and naturalist Thomas Henry Huxley, an early proponent of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution,¹⁶ and Huxley himself dreamed of a career in science from an early age, and his interest in the natural sciences can clearly be traced in many of his works. However, a serious illness resulted in his going partially blind, which led him to choose to pursue a literary career instead.¹⁷ His works tend to be witty and satirical, and address a wide range of topics. Roland T. Sion has asserted:

In fact, Aldous Huxley, as a writer of fiction in the 20th century, willingly assumes the role of a modern philosopher-king or literary prophet by examining the essence of what it means to be human in the modern age. As is evident in his fiction to be examined and supported by the artist’s own words in selected essays and letters, Huxley was a prolific genius who was always searching throughout his life for an understanding of self and one’s place within the universe. Engaging the reader in imaginative narratives, he was to ask numerous probing questions about humanity’s relationship to its physical and metaphysical worlds.¹⁸

¹⁵ Harold Bloom, *Aldous Huxley* (New York: Bloom’s Literary Criticism, 2010), 223.

¹⁶ Joanne Woiak, “Designing a Brave New World: Eugenics, Politics, and Fiction,” *The Public Historian* 29, no. 3 (2007): 106-7, doi:10.1525/tph.2007.29.3.105.

¹⁷ Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), 33.

¹⁸ Roland T. Sion, *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 2.

Huxley has expressed his opinions on a number of important social and philosophical issues in his works. Technological advancements were among the primary themes of his writings, and Huxley became a persuasive voice in protest against contemporary materialism and a future world dominated by science.¹⁹ *Brave New World*, Huxley's most famous novel, for instance, helped shape an awareness of what he saw as an inexorable trend toward technological power that would lead to dehumanization.²⁰

Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in the early 1930s, a time when the horrors of World War I were still fresh in people's memories. This interwar period also saw totalitarianism and Nazism gaining momentum both in the Soviet Union and Europe.²¹ What is more, tremendous technological developments have been achieved around that time and the world was becoming thoroughly industrialized.²² Mass production of a wide variety of goods, ranging from cars and radios to foods and clothes, was made possible for the first time in history. The faster pace of life which could be observed during that period contributed to the general increase in uncertainty, anxieties, and fear of losing one's identity amidst the constant change and advancement. Harold Bloom has summarized Huxley's sources of inspiration for his dystopia: "Massive industrialization, coupled with severe economic depression and the rise of fascism, were the backdrop for the novel. It was this turbulence that informed Huxley's cautionary vision of the future."²³

¹⁹ Sion, *Aldous Huxley*, 7.

²⁰ Sion, *Aldous Huxley*, 7.

²¹ Raychel Haugrud Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 41.

²² Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 41.

²³ Harold Bloom, *Aldous's Huxley's Brave New World* (Broomall, Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 14.

Published in 1932, *Brave New World* is explicitly an extrapolation into the future of trends that Huxley witnessed in his present.²⁴ The novel is a perfect example of a technological dystopia.²⁵ Huxley depicts a world entirely dominated by powerful technologies that not only intervene into the people's lives but also substantially contribute to the control of the entire society and, supposedly, maintain order and stability. The novel is set in the fictional "World State", where every citizen is segregated into one of the five principal castes of the society: Alphas, Betas, Deltas, Gammas, and, finally, Epsilons. Alphas and Betas are described to be physically and intellectually as well as emotionally superior to the remaining castes. Hence, they occupy the leading positions in the state, work in the laboratories, and are responsible for creative tasks such as writing the state slogans, whereas the least advanced citizens are believed to possess no human intelligence and are only assigned menial jobs.

In spite of this segregation, every member of the society, even the Epsilons, appear to be happy and perfectly content with their roles and occupations. This worldwide complacency is achieved through the process of "conditioning" the citizens from the moment they are made. Not only are the people conditioned to like or dislike certain things and to believe any truth the supervisors choose, but their bodies are also made to be either more or less developed with the help of chemical treatments such as prolonged oxygen deprivation.

2.2 Dystopia, or Utopia?

At first glance, the state of the society depicted in Huxley's novel does not strike one as especially dismal or appalling. On the contrary, the story lacks the features that are commonly found in typical dystopias: there is no ongoing war, the citizens are not constantly intimidated or threatened with

²⁴ Lyman Tower Sargent, "Do Dystopias Matter?" in *Dystopia(n) Matters: On the Page, on Screen, on Stage*, ed. Fátima Vieira (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 11.

²⁵ Claves, *Dystopia: A Natural History*, 5.

torture or death; and there are not even such problems as poverty or unemployment. All citizens are given jobs that they enjoy, there are virtually no illnesses, the people have an abundance of all sorts of goods, and the society appears as safe and stable as it can possibly be. Mustapha Mond, Resident World Controller of Western Europe in the novel, notes the benefits of being a World State citizen:

The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there's soma.²⁶

When viewed from this angle, the text may easily be mistaken for a utopian novel. Anya Heise-von der Lippe has pointed out that *Brave New World*, interestingly, combines both seemingly utopian and blatantly dystopian elements, thus drawing attention to its somewhat ambiguous, ironic position.²⁷

However, the inherent problem of the World State becomes more apparent once the reader is properly acquainted with how the stability is achieved. To begin with, the text depicts a highly advanced reproductive technology that allows the state to grow embryos in bottles, essentially mass-producing human clones. The babies are subsequently conditioned to fit flawlessly into one of the five castes with the help of sleep-training, hypnosis, and psychological manipulation. In many ways, *Brave New World* demonstrates the result of transplanting the growing ideals of mass production onto humanity itself, rather than simply humanity's machines or products.²⁸ Furthermore, the novel presents the issue of the lack of freedom: for instance, the citizens are never

²⁶ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Vintage Classics, 2020), 193-194.

²⁷ Anya Heise-von der Lippe, "Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)," in *Handbook of the English Novel of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, ed. Christoph Reinfandt (Berlin: De Gruyter, Inc., 2017), 215-216.

²⁸ Bloom, *Aldous's Huxley's Brave New World*, 21.

given options as to their occupation and they are not permitted to choose a single partner and are instead strongly discouraged from long-term relationships. The World State does not allow for self-expression or creativity, as every representative of a caste is supposed to be identical to the rest. As William W. Matter has observed:

The society of A.F. 632 is “perfectly” terrifying to the creative individual who wishes to test the gates of heaven and hell, and who seeks to find doors of perceptions not conveniently opened for perverse purposes by the state. When pleasure and escape become unavoidable goals, Huxley reasons, the individual lives in a nightmarish ideal society that cannot allow him the right to be unhappy.²⁹

The flaws of the futuristic society are thoroughly explored through the perspective of the misfit Bernard Marx, and the impressions of an outsider John the Savage, thus gradually exposing the fictional world as a dystopia. By relating the characters’ innermost thoughts and impressions, Huxley seeks to make the reader comprehend the inherent drawbacks of the World State, communicating a compelling message: technological progress always comes at a price, and it may be far greater than one would expect – surrendering one’s liberties and forgetting the essence of being human.³⁰

2.3 The Narrative Situation in *Brave New World*

Brave New World is divided into eighteen chapters, all of which are written from a third-person omniscient point of view. The all-knowing narrator presents the reader with numerous distinct perspectives and the characters’ inner monologues, as the narration switches between different focalizers. The novel’s plot revolves around several central characters: Bernard Marx, John “the Savage”, Lenina Crowne, Helmholtz Watson, and Mustapha Mond. Bernard and John may be identified as the novel’s protagonists since their storylines dominate the novel and their viewpoints

²⁹ William W. Matter, “The Utopian Tradition and Aldous Huxley,” *Science Fiction Studies* 2, no. 2 (1975): 148, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4238937>.

³⁰ Sion, *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning*, 1.

are most frequently reflected. With that in mind, even though John definitely functions as the action's main catalyst, the narrative perspective does not encourage the reader to sympathize with him or any of the main characters.³¹ Anya Heise-von der Lippe has pointed out that

Huxley clearly abandoned the idea of making either Bernard or the Savage the hero "in favor of having no hero at all" (Firchow 2003, 109). The ironic distance created by the characterizations of Bernard, John and Lenina is certainly not a coincidence, as it matches the novel's general ironic, distanced style. The heterodiegetic narrative with a tendency towards zero/external rather than internal focalisation creates a distance to the characters, which supports the novel's dystopian criticism of a Brave New World of "goodly" posthuman creatures.³²

Hence, Huxley creates a perceptible distance between the readers and the fictional world and the characters, hence highlighting their unconventionality and lack of humanity. By preventing the reader's identification with any of the protagonists, the text draws all the attention to the themes that it represents, since *Brave New World* is a novel of ideas and concepts. Notwithstanding, the novel frequently provides insights into a variety of the characters' minds in order to provide a more profound understanding of the fictional world. Such insights are not meant to encourage the reader's feelings for the characters or identification with them, but to allow for a comprehensive depiction of the fictional world. A closer analysis will thus be carried out for the sake of determining the reasons behind the specific modes of narration that Huxley utilizes, and their effects.

2.4 *Brave New World* as an Authorial Novel

According to Genette, zero focalization, a phenomenon "that can often be found in the classical narrative,"³³ refers to the authorial novel, in which focalization is not restricted to any one point of

³¹ Heise-von der Lippe, "Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)," 216.

³² Heise-von der Lippe, "Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)," 227.

³³ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 189.

view: the story is told “from the outside.”³⁴ Zero focalization does not feature a single central reflector (or focalizer) and events are presented by an omniscient authorial narrator. The authorial narrator, therefore, stands above the world of action and is able to enter the minds of multiple characters throughout the novel, revealing their private thoughts, feelings or motives to the readers. This type of narrator normally employs their omniscience to disclose quite explicitly what is what, introducing scenarios and settings, evaluating the characters’ behavior and commenting on the events, and at times even addressing the reader.³⁵ Since the narrator in *Brave New World* is not part of the fictional world, in Genette’s terminology they may be characterized as extradiegetic.³⁶ Fludernik has summarized the qualities of this type of narrator, stating that he functions as “the Lord of Creation surveying his world, knows the past, present and future of his characters, can move between locations at different ends of the fictional world, and has unlimited access to characters’ minds.”³⁷ The narrator in Huxley’s work fits this characterization precisely; the thesis will now discuss specific instances from the text and aim to analyze the effects of particular narrative situations and focalizers in the novel.

2.5 Initial Chapters as the Introduction into the World State

Authorial narrative often opens with a broad sweep of the world of the novel, with a historical abstract or a sociological analysis of a state or period.³⁸ In the case of *Brave New World*, the novel does not start with a plunge into the plot but with an exposition, devoting the first two chapters to explanations of the main elements of social control used in London’s Fordian society,³⁹ immersing

³⁴ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 102.

³⁵ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 124.

³⁶ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 247.

³⁷ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 124.

³⁸ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 125.

³⁹ Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 79.

the reader into the World State and exposing the current state of their society and the mindset of the citizens. The first chapter specifically aims to familiarize the reader with the biological foundation of the fictional world, focusing on the state's remarkable scientific achievements in such areas as human cloning, accelerated maturation and different methods of prenatal conditioning. The first paragraph consists of two verbless sentences, merely introducing the setting: "A squat grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY."⁴⁰ The majority of the chapter features similar descriptive passages as the narrator presents the setting and aims to draw a picture of the strange futuristic world in the readers' minds.

As numerous bits of crucial insight into the way the World State functions are supplied in the first chapters, the satirical tone of narration and the covert narrator's occasional sardonic comments reveal the narrator's attitude towards the society that is being described, thus also influencing the reader's perception of the storyline. The narrator even goes so far as to address the reader: the Director "had a long chin and big, rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? Fifty? Fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise; in this year of stability, A.F. 632, it didn't occur to you to ask it."⁴¹ In this sentence it is revealed that the novel is set in an alternative future, and Rudolf Schmerl even sees it as Huxley's way of announcing that he is writing a fantasy.⁴² This further emphasizes the role of the narrator in the initial chapters as his judgment evidently shapes the readers' understanding of the depicted world.

⁴⁰ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 1.

⁴¹ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 2.

⁴² Rudolf B. Schmerl, "The Two Future Worlds of Aldous Huxley," *PMLA* 77, no. 3 (1962): 329. doi:10.2307/460493.

The third chapter is one of the most unconventional stylistic pieces to be found in any of Huxley's novels – a dialogue between various characters in different locations at the Hatchery is juxtaposed and intertwined to create a steadily increasing irony.⁴³ The chapter is organized by paragraphs that alternate between several characters' inner monologues and the conversations taking place among the Hatchery workers as they are getting ready for leisure activities.⁴⁴ An omniscient narrator is able to effortlessly switch between different locations, offering countless perspectives of different occurrences within the same timeframe, and Huxley employs this technique to contrast, as Reiff puts it, "the stable behaviorist present of the World State with its unstable neurotic past."⁴⁵ Namely, the narrator juxtaposes Mustapha Mond and the Director's discussion of the World State's history, their opinions on monogamy and the significance of mass consumption with the characters' conversations, essentially illustrating conditioning in action:

"Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of industry. The sole result ..."

"Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches; the more stitches ..."

"Conscientious objection on an enormous scale. Anything not to consume. Back to nature."

"I do love flying. I do love flying."

"Back to culture. Yes, actually to culture. You can't consume much if you sit still and read books."

"Do I look all right?" Lenina asked. Her jacket was made of bottle green acetate cloth with green viscose fur; at the cuffs and collar...

"Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending."

Green corduroy shorts and white viscose-woolen stockings turned down below the knee.

"Then came the famous British Museum Massacre. Two thousand culture fans gassed with dichlorethyl sulphide."⁴⁶

⁴³ Schmerl, "The Two Future Worlds of Aldous Huxley," 329.

⁴⁴ Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 79.

⁴⁵ Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 79.

⁴⁶ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 42-43.

In this passage, the perspective constantly switches between three settings: the Controller's speech in the laboratory, the sleep-conditioning room where hypnopaedic slogans are recounted, and Lenina Crowne's conversation with her friend Fanny, in which the narrator thoroughly describes every item that Lenina is wearing, accentuating the significance of material goods in the futuristic world. Towards the end of the chapter, the text turns into a multi-voiced account of unconnected bits of information. As Anya Heise-von der Lippe has observed,

Individual voices, clearly identifiable at the beginning of the chapter, become increasingly lost in a collective but not homogenous narrative towards its end. The hypnopaedic slogans, ascribed to the loudspeakers at the Conditioning Centre, rather than a particular narrator or focaliser, also create an increased sense of a mechanical narrative community, similar to the social community which has replaced the concept of individuality and personhood as markers of identity in the *Brave New World*.⁴⁷

The majority of the main characters are introduced for the first time in this chapter and the narrator makes sure no character receives too much attention, stressing their lack of personality, and confirming the observations that in this novel, the characters serve to illustrate the world, rather than the world being there for the characters to inhabit.

2.6 Bernard Marx as the Focalizer

Bernard Marx's perspective is mostly predominant for the first half of the text as Huxley establishes him as the only discontent citizen of the World State. Although an Alpha-Plus, Bernard is a misfit because his incomplete conditioning has rendered him significantly shorter than the remaining Alpha men. The narrator depicts him as being sullen and resentful, revealing the true cause of his antagonism: "Bernard hated them, hated them. But they were two, they were large, they were strong."⁴⁸ Through the extensive use of reported thought and free indirect discourse⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Heise-von der Lippe, "Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)," 226.

⁴⁸ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 40.

⁴⁹ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 56.

the reader is made aware of Bernard's inferiority complex and hypocrisy: Marx reproaches his male colleagues for their evident promiscuity for the sole reason that he cannot have what they do:

“Talking about her as though she were a bit of meat.” Bernard ground his teeth. “Have her here, have her there.” Like mutton. Degrading her to so much mutton. She said she'd think it over, she said she'd give me an answer this week. Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford.” He would have liked to go up to them and hit them in the face—hard, again and again.⁵⁰

The protagonist is clearly furious and jealous of his sexual rivals and by revealing his actual thoughts and emotions, the narrator makes sure that the reader does not sympathize with Bernard: he may be different from the rest of the characters, but he is far from being a moral and noble protester willing to fight for his beliefs. Reiff identifies Bernard Marx as an antihero, declaring that “although this unhappy misfit rails against society, he, at the same time, wants to be admired by his fellow citizens.”⁵¹ According to Reiff, Bernard is “a braggart who tries to assert his superiority, and, when he gets the chance to be popular, he happily embraces the Fordian society.”⁵² Nevertheless, Bernard's perspective is crucial for the novel's plot since it vividly illustrates what it is like to be an outcast in an otherwise homogeneous society where everybody is happy. By giving the readers full access to Bernard's inner thoughts and focusing on his perceptions of the society, the narrator exposes the futuristic world to be deeply flawed and dehumanized. His viewpoint is sharply contrasted with the way the Controllers and most citizens see the World State – as a place of happiness and stability.

Despite his nonconformist views, Bernard proves to be hypocritical and unlikeable as the story progresses. Having brought John back from the Reservation, Bernard suddenly becomes popular as the savage's guardian and delights in his newfound importance.⁵³ Overjoyed with the

⁵⁰ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 39.

⁵¹ Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 82.

⁵² Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 82.

⁵³ Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 64.

sudden recognition, Bernard starts behaving in the same manner that he appeared to despise not long ago:

Success went fizzily to Bernard's head, and in the process completely reconciled him (as any good intoxicant should do) to a world which, up till then, he had found very unsatisfactory. In so far as it recognized him as important, the order of things was good. But, reconciled by his success, he yet refused to forego the privilege of criticizing this order. For the act of criticizing heightened his sense of importance, made him feel larger. Moreover, he did genuinely believe that there were things to criticize. (At the same time, he genuinely liked being a success and having all the girls he wanted.)⁵⁴

One can observe the narrator's straightforward evaluation of Bernard's character as he analyzes his inner feelings and exposes him as a hypocrite. Towards the middle of the novel, the perspective shifts from Bernard's to John the Savage's, who brings an entirely new outlook forasmuch as he was raised outside of the World State and was not subject to conditioning like the rest of the characters. Heise-von der Lippe has pointed out: "While the novel begins in the Brave New World, centering on Bernard Marx's, albeit ludicrously hesitant, resistance to the cultural standard, it later introduces a visitor, the Savage, whose reactions to the Brave New World serve as a more obvious narrative of resistance."⁵⁵

2.7 John the Savage as the Primary Voice of Opposition

John the Savage is a truly unique character in the novel. First introduced in the seventh chapter, he instantly assumes the role of the new protagonist. John's perspective dominates the seventh and eighth chapters as the reader is acquainted with his past through numerous flashbacks. By presenting John's memories, the narrator draws a comprehensive picture of his background, establishing him as an outsider both in the Reservation and the World State:

Lots of men came to see Linda. The boys began to point their fingers at him. In the strange other words they said that Linda was bad; they called her names he did not

⁵⁴ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 136.

⁵⁵ Heise-von der Lippe, "Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)," 216.

understand, but that he knew were bad names. One day they sang a song about her, again and again. He threw stones at them. They threw back; a sharp stone cut his cheek. The blood wouldn't stop; he was covered with blood.⁵⁶

Despite being the son of two World State citizens, John was raised outside of the civilized world after the Director, his father, had stranded Linda in the Savage Reservation. As he is lonely and discontent in Malpais, John agrees to move to the World State, which makes his perspective truly unique: he is the only character in the novel capable of comparing the two different worlds. Reiff has affirmed:

The real hero of the book is John the Savage, who belongs neither to the New Mexican nor the London society. He is rejected by the primitive community since he is the son of Fordian parents, but he is also unfit for the Brave New World since he has knowledge of love, passions, and family ties that he learned on the Indian Reservation and through his reading of Shakespeare. Naive and simple, he has no idea when he leaves the reservation that he will be entering a society in which emotions, culture, religion, individuality, and freedom are all sacrificed for the sake of peace and one-dimensional happiness.⁵⁷

John as a focalizer is crucial for the story since he can judge the futuristic society objectively and provide the reader with an entirely different outlook. Thereby, he is the innocent eye who observes, tastes, and questions the utopian world that everyone else admires,⁵⁸ drawing attention to the society's inherent flaws. Taught to respect monogamy, parenthood, religion, and poetry, John is unable to adjust to the civilized world, where "everything is mechanical, planned, bottled, dehumanized, and frightful."⁵⁹ The protagonist's passionate discussion with Mustapha Mond on the actual price of happiness in the World State is the apex of his disillusionment in civilization:

"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin."

"In fact," said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy."

⁵⁶ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 111.

⁵⁷ Reiff, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, 82.

⁵⁸ Sion, *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning*, 153.

⁵⁹ Saffeen Nueman Arif, "The Civilization of Aldous Huxley's *Brave World*," *International Journal of Literature and Arts* 4, no. 3 (2016): 38, doi:10.11648/j.ijla.20160403.13.

“Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.” There was a long silence. “I claim them all,” said the Savage at last.⁶⁰

Establishing the Savage as the primary voice of opposition and expressing his reactions essentially dissipates any doubts on the impeccability of the futuristic society, proving that the depicted world is, in fact, a dystopia, rather than a utopia. John emphasizes the necessity of freedom, individuality, and the right to choose, all of which are non-existent in the World State.

The resolution of the novel in the form of John the Savage’s decision to take his own life rather than remain in this sterile world or return to his former primitive existence seems to offer no hope for humanity.⁶¹ The protagonist, however, appeared to be torn between two extremes – with no suitable alternative to the World State or the Reservation. Despite contemplating the idea of a different resolution – one that would provide the Savage with another choice whereby he would seek others like himself and form a new colony of like-minded people, Huxley resisted changing the ending of his novel.⁶² After all, *Brave New World* is first and foremost a novel of themes and ideas, written precisely in the manner which does not evoke reader identification with any of the characters. John’s tragic fate serves the purpose of producing a powerful enough impression on the readers, thus leaving no doubt that the World State’s “utopia” is not something to strive for.

⁶⁰ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 211-212.

⁶¹ Sion, *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning*, 143.

⁶² Sion, *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning*, 143.

Chapter 3 – the Role of the Narrator in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

3.1 *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Historical Context and General Introduction

Eric Arthur Blair, (1903–1950), working under the pen name George Orwell, was a famous English novelist, essayist, and critic. Orwell was influenced by his stay in Burma, which allowed him to experience British colonialism first hand and provided the writer with a storehouse of memories that he would draw upon for the rest of his life.⁶³ In December 1936, Orwell traveled to Spain, where he joined one of the groups fighting against General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War.⁶⁴ It was during this time that his political views were formed as he had to fight against the Soviet-backed communists who were brutally suppressing their political opponents. This experience instilled an incessant hatred of totalitarian governments in the writer. In his essay “Why I Write” Orwell has declared: “The Spanish war and other events in 1936–7 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic Socialism, as I understand it.”⁶⁵ One of his most renowned novels, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is the embodiment of Orwell's denunciation of totalitarianism since it depicts the disastrous consequences that such regimes may result in.

From its release in 1949, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been considered a stinging indictment of totalitarian ideology and oppressive governments.⁶⁶ The dystopian novel presents a

⁶³ John Rodden and John Rossi, *The Cambridge Introduction to George Orwell* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 10.

⁶⁴ Edward Quinn, *Critical Companion to George Orwell: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 15.

⁶⁵ George Orwell, “Why I Write,” (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 5.

⁶⁶ James M. Decker, “George Orwell's 1984 and Political Ideology,” in *George Orwell*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007), 133.

bleak image of a future world, divided into three superstates – Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia, all of which are allegedly at war with one another most of the time. The events of the plot take place in Oceania, London in particular, chief city of Airstrip One.⁶⁷ The society depicted in the text is utterly oppressed and controlled by the merciless Party that has unlimited authority over the citizens, and exercises its power in the form of constant surveillance, propaganda, brainwashing, intimidation, and torture, among others. Orwell is believed to have based his dystopian world on Stalin's and Hitler's regimes,⁶⁸ stressing the effects that such regimes may have on human autonomy and personality. As a political dystopia, the novel focuses extensively on the inner workings of the Party, the mechanisms of controlling the citizens, and even provides numerous quotations from books that supply detailed explanations of the philosophy and practice governing the Party's policy and strategies. The plot revolves around the gradual exposure of the government's abuse of power and a feeble attempt at rebellion of Winston Smith, the protagonist. It is now generally agreed by critics that the novel is not so much a vision of the future as Orwell's warning concerning his own time.⁶⁹ Through the vivid illustration of the damage and horrors that totalitarianism can generate, the writer encourages the readers to resist and oppose this type of governing.

3.2 The Narrative Situation in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Actorial Novel

Orwell's novel is written in the third person limited point of view for the perspective is restricted solely to a single character's experiences and thoughts. Genette defines this type of narrative mood as internal focalization, affirming that "the very principle of this narrative mode implies in all

⁶⁷ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 2.

⁶⁸ Adrian Wanner, "The Underground Man as Big Brother: Dostoevsky's and Orwell's Anti-Utopia," in *George Orwell*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007), 57.

⁶⁹ Melvyn New, "Nineteen Eighty-Four," *American Speech* 51, no. 3/4 (1976): 278, www.jstor.org/stable/454979.

strictness that the focal character never be described or even referred to from the outside, and that his thoughts or perceptions never be analyzed objectively by the narrator.”⁷⁰ *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not contain any omniscient voice, offering no external comments on the characters or the depicted events. Consequently, throughout all the three parts of the novel, the reader’s perception of the fictional world is confined to Winston’s judgements and impressions. Texts featuring a narrative that is entirely focused through the consciousness of one character may be referred to as actorial novels.⁷¹ As the protagonist is the only focalizer, his point of view governs the narrative, allowing the readers constant access to his inner monologue. Fludernik has commented on the effects of focalizing a text through one character:

The allure of reflector-mode narrative lies in its ability to reproduce what life feels like in the living of it – in contrast to the retrospective first-person account (good, but not good enough) and the authoritative, quasi-divine view of the world in authorial narrative, which gives us unexpected insight but is again too neat (content-wise) and too confused and sprawling (formally) for some people’s taste.⁷²

Presenting the dystopian world through the eyes of the main hero results in a vivid and detailed description of everything he experiences and endures, as though immersing the reader into the fictional world. Nathan Waddel has pointed out the prevailing ambiguity of the story’s events: “Like the ‘shadow-world’ of uncertainty in which Winston lives and suffers, the novel’s meanings are themselves often shadowy and unclear.”⁷³ Internal focalization through the protagonist directly influences the readers’ impressions, enhancing Orwell’s depiction of the horrors of totalitarianism with the help of three techniques: restricting the reader’s knowledge and thus establishing an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear of the unknown; creating misleading expectations due to

⁷⁰ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 192.

⁷¹ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 104.

⁷² Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 130-131.

⁷³ Nathan Waddel, “Introduction: Orwell’s Book,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteen Eighty-Four*, ed. Nathan Waddel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 6.

Winston's poor judgement; and evoking the reader's sympathy for Winston through a high proximity to his innermost feelings. All of these strategies result in a masterful portrayal of a nightmarish world where the protagonist, an everyman, struggles to resist the oppressive state.

3.3 Internal Focalization: Restriction of the Reader's Knowledge

Internal focalization through a single character presupposes the fact that the reader is only aware of what the character himself witnesses and believes. Hence, the novel grants exclusively the information that Winston is familiar with, which is only a small part of the bigger picture. The text's plot is built around a number of mysteries that Winston endeavors to disentangle. For instance, throughout the entire novel the protagonist strives to learn as much as possible about the Brotherhood, or the notorious Big Brother who is allegedly watching him and all the citizens. The fictional world's entire propaganda policy is centered around the image of this powerful ruler, yet Winston does not even know if Big Brother truly exists. As the protagonist ponders over the history of Oceania, the reader is disappointed by his obvious inability to provide any specific details:

He tried to remember in what year he had first heard mention of Big Brother. He thought it must have been at some time in the sixties, but it was impossible to be certain. In the Party histories, of course, Big Brother figured as the leader and guardian of the Revolution since its very earliest days. His exploits had been gradually pushed backwards in time until already they extended into the fabulous world of the forties and the thirties, when the capitalists in their strange cylindrical hats still rode through the streets of London in great gleaming motor-cars or horse carriages with glass sides. There was no knowing how much of this legend was true and how much invented. Winston could not even remember at what date the Party itself had come into existence. He did not believe he had ever heard the word Ingsoc before 1960, but it was possible that in its Oldspeak form – 'English Socialism', that is to say – it had been current earlier.⁷⁴

Since no written records of the past events are allowed in the country, the citizens must rely on their memory as the government easily manipulates history to their advantage, constantly choosing

⁷⁴ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 38.

the version of the past that will best suit their current policy. Therefore, Winston cannot know for certain when the Party came into power, what precisely they are doing to maintain their ruling position, and most importantly: why. The constant atmosphere of uncertainty in the novel reflects the state of the citizens' minds as they live in the world of constant fear and misinformation, never knowing whom they can really trust or what to believe. However, the perpetual issue that the protagonist is trying to comprehend is why the Party does everything in its power to oppress the citizens and take away any semblance of personal freedom. Isaac Deutscher asserts that "I understand *how*: I do not understand *why*" is the refrain of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; Winston knows how Oceania functions but he never determines what the ultimate purpose of the elaborate mechanism of tyranny is.⁷⁵ As Winston never gets the chance to learn the actual truth, the reader remain in the dark as well. All the text allows the readers is bits and pieces of what Winston himself is forced to believe or mere speculations of his. When the protagonist asks O'Brien directly if Big Brother is real, the truth is still not revealed:

"Does Big Brother exist?"

"Of course he exists. The Party exists. Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party."

"Does he exist in the same way as I exist?"

"You do not exist," said O'Brien.⁷⁶

Winston's lack of knowledge and understanding of the world he lives in is projected onto the readers, which in turn enhances the fear of the unknown and unexplained, emphasizing how horrific the world of Oceania is. In the end, the novel leaves it up to the readers to draw up their own conclusions because it never unveils the actual truth about the Big Brother, as well as a number of other crucial aspects.

⁷⁵ Isaac Deutscher, "1984 – The Mysticism of Cruelty," in *George Orwell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Raymond Williams (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 122.

⁷⁶ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 271-272.

3.4 Emmanuel Goldstein's Book: Additional Source of Information

An inherent feature of internal focalization is an entirely covert narrator who is not allowed to express any ideas or opinions, aside from those of the focalizer. Hence, such a novel may only narrate what the focalizer himself thinks or sees. Orwell finds a clever way out of this limitation to provide the reader with extensive knowledge of the Oceania's past, the history behind the Party's slogans, explaining the fictional world's geopolitical situation, and even offering political ideas. All of this is achieved through inserting lengthy extracts from a book that Winston reads into the novel. Critics have remarked that the fictional book *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* provides views that were very close to some of Orwell's own political thinking at the time, and even closer to some of his more obvious sources.⁷⁷ This book, commonly believed to have been written by Emmanuel Goldstein, Oceania's primary enemy, explains the origins of the Party's philosophy and summarizes the general structure of Oceanic society:

At the apex of the pyramid comes Big Brother. Big Brother is infallible and all-powerful. Every success, every achievement, every victory, every scientific discovery, all knowledge, all wisdom, all happiness, all virtue, are held to issue directly from his leadership and inspiration. Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. He is a face on the hoardings, a voice on the telescreen. We may be reasonably sure that he will never die, and there is already considerable uncertainty as to when he was born. Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization.⁷⁸

Adrian Wanner points out that the purpose of the excerpts from Goldstein's book is "providing the reader with a description and analysis of the world of 1984 from a more knowledgeable source than Winston Smith."⁷⁹ The protagonist's own level of awareness is severely inadequate for a comprehensive portrayal of the dystopian world. As mentioned above, Winston's perspective is

⁷⁷ Raymond Williams, "Afterword: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1984," in *George Orwell's 1984*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007), 11.

⁷⁸ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 216-217.

⁷⁹ Wanner, "The Underground Man as Big Brother," 58.

restricted by his faulty memory, years of propaganda, and lack of reliable and trustworthy sources of information:

How could you tell how much of it was lies? It might be true that the average human being was better off now than he had been before the Revolution. The only evidence to the contrary was the mute protest in your own bones, the instinctive feeling that the conditions you lived in were intolerable and that at some other time they must have been different.⁸⁰

Consequently, Goldstein's book is employed to supply the information with a level of certainty and authority that the protagonist is not capable of. With that in mind, the book is later revealed to have been written by the Party loyalists and O'Brien in order to trick and trap the rebels, thus proving to be a major mislead.

3.5 Winston as an Unreliable Narrator

As a focalizer, not only is Winston frequently unable to provide valid details and insight, but he repeatedly misleads the reader, making wrong assumptions and misinterpreting characters. Since the readers have no access to an objective viewpoint, besides the book extracts, they must rely on the protagonist's judgment and perception of reality, which, as is later revealed, is very far from the actual truth. Some critics even regard Winston as an unreliable narrator since his poor judgement creates misleading expectations.⁸¹ An unreliable narrator is commonly defined as a figure whom the reader discovers to be lacking in credibility.⁸² In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Wayne C. Booth links the reliability of narrators to reader experience, asserting: "At one extreme we find narrators whose every judgment is suspect [...]. At the other are narrators scarcely distinguishable from the omniscient author. In between lies a confused variety of more-or-less reliable narrators,

⁸⁰ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 76-77.

⁸¹ Basia Miller Gulati, "Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Escape from Doublethink," *The International Fiction Review* 12, no. 2 (1985): 83, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/13754/14836>.

⁸² Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 27.

many of them puzzling mixtures of sound and unsound.”⁸³ The text frequently supplies Winston’s assessments of different occurrences, and deductions that prove to be fatal errors of judgement. Perhaps the biggest mistake the protagonist makes is misreading and trusting several characters, which subsequently leads to his imprisonment. Desperate to find like-minded citizens to help him oppose the Party, Winston wholeheartedly believes O’Brien to be an ally:

But there was a fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen Winston knew – yes, he *knew*! – that O’Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had passed. It was as though their two minds had opened and the thoughts were flowing from one into the other through their eyes. “I am with you,” O’Brien seemed to be saying to him. “I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your contempt, your hatred, your disgust. But don’t worry, I am on your side!”⁸⁴

The text describes the moment that Winston comes to trust O’Brien in such a convincing manner because Winston himself is entirely convinced of the correctness of his perception. Fludernik has pointed out that unreliable narrators may “give a distorted picture of (fictional) reality as a result of being obsessed by certain ideas.”⁸⁵ In the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the protagonist becomes so captivated by the idea of resistance that he sees what he wishes to see instead of the truth. Toward the middle of the book, he directly discloses his genuine feelings for the regime to O’Brien and urges him to work together. The harsh truth about O’Brien’s actual intentions is uncovered only at the end of Part II. This wrong assumption of Winston’s establishes a particular expectation which turns out in a completely different manner. The readers are unaware of the fact that Winston is deadly wrong since they can only see the events through Winston’s eyes. Another example of the protagonist’s poor judgment is his trusting Mr. Charrington, one of the proles that Winston believed “had stayed human.”⁸⁶ Sadly, Mr. Charrington turns out to be a member of Thought Police

⁸³ Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 274.

⁸⁴ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 19.

⁸⁵ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 27.

⁸⁶ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 172.

and subsequently betrays Winston and Julia. Therefore, by focalizing all the plot developments through a single character, the text aims to mislead the readers and trick them into trusting his perceptions and beliefs.

3.6 Winston's Perspective and the Reader's Sympathy

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the internal focalization promotes a high proximity to Winston's inner thoughts and feelings. The text essentially grants full access to the character's mind, providing a better comprehension of what he experiences and endures. The narrative positions the readers alongside the protagonist, allowing them to experience all the events that the protagonist has to withstand, and to bear witness to his thoughts as they happen. As all of the protagonist's deepest fears, struggles, as well as his desires and hopes are laid bare, Winston is revealed as an innocent and highly relatable character who evokes sympathy from the reader. Brigid Rooney has noted that "establishing such close identification with Winston's point of view is an important way in which the narrative engages the reader's sympathy, making Winston the main conduit for representation of what it means to be human, to be an individual."⁸⁷ Indeed, positioning the reader inside Winston's mind is highly effective in terms of engaging the reader in the story and making the last part of the novel even more powerful. Winston and Julia are captured by the Thought Police at the end of Part II, and in the following part "all hope is obliterated"⁸⁸ as the main character is brutally tortured and eventually mentally broken in the Ministry of Love. Charles Garrett has observed:

In the last quarter of the book (the torture in Room 101) there is hardly a page without images of filth and dirt; and these are generously mixed with images of the suffering of Winston and the happy sadism of O'Brien. Screams of pain steadily punctuate the

⁸⁷ Brigid Rooney, "Narrative Viewpoint and the Representation of Power in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*," *Sydney Studies in English* 28, no. 2002 (2002): 74, <https://search.informit.org/doi/epdf/10.3316/ielapa.200211435>.

⁸⁸ Jeffrey Meyers, *George Orwell: The Critical Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 250.

beating and the shock treatment: the savagery of the many chapters devoted to assault and cruelty is almost unendurable.⁸⁹

The vivid depiction of Winston's physical suffering is augmented by the passages describing his emotional state. As he is utterly desperate, confused, and lost, the reader gets to witness his anguish at first hand. One example of an insight into Winston's feelings is the passage from the interrogation scene:

Again the feeling of helplessness descended upon Winston. His eyes flitted towards the dial. He not only did not know whether "yes" or "no" was the answer that would save him from pain; he did not even know which answer he believed to be the true one.⁹⁰

Providing full insight into the protagonist's confused and disoriented consciousness, the text exposes the gruesomeness of the Party's methods of interrogating the rebels, "curing" them of their individualistic ideas and preventing further thoughtcrime. This specific strategy of detailing every horrific moment of imprisonment and torture that Winston has to endure emphasizes Orwell's representation of totalitarian governments as the ultimate evil.

3.7 The Novel's Resolution: Warning and Relatability

Part III of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is undoubtedly the grimmest section of all since it is full of cruel torture scenes, and Winston's physical and emotional affliction. The very ending of the novel, however, is arguably the most shocking and powerful bit. As the text closely follows Winston's desperation and disheartenment, it frequently focuses on his concern about Julia and his unfading love for her. During one of the interrogation scenes, O'Brien reveals the real reason behind the arrest and the seemingly unending torture: "Shall I tell you why we have brought you here? To cure you! To make you sane! [...] We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have

⁸⁹ J. C. Garrett, *Hope or Disillusion: Three Versions of Utopia: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Samuel Butler, George Orwell* (New Zealand: University of Canterbury Publications Committee, 1984), 59-60.

⁹⁰ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 260.

committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them.”⁹¹ Despite Winston’s initial strong conviction that “they can’t get inside you,” his promise to himself to never betray Julia, and his deep hatred for the Party throughout the entire story, he is eventually broken. O’Brien makes a ghastly promise to Winston not long after he has been imprisoned:

Things will happen to you from which you could not recover, if you lived a thousand years... Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity... You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves.⁹²

When threatened with being eaten alive by rats in the infamous Room 101, the protagonist forsakes his love for Julia and begs O’Brien to torture her instead of him. The reader is able to follow Winston’s terror and train of thought at first hand as he frantically attempts to come up with a way to save himself, until finally realizing that he has to condemn Julia to escape inevitable death. At this moment, there ceases to be any hope for him to regain his resolve and fight for his freedom. The last chapter of the novel presents Winston as a broken man, whose spirit and will have been crushed and who will never try to resist the Party again. The internal perspective allows the reader to comprehend the dramatic change of Winston’s attitudes as the text recounts his melancholic reaction to accidentally meeting Julia in a park, as well as his elation about Oceania’s alleged victory in Africa. The last sentences of the book leave no doubt about the devastating ability of the totalitarian government to break a human being:

He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two ginscented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.⁹³

⁹¹ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 265.

⁹² Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 268-269.

⁹³ Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 311.

Through the experience of its protagonist, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* masterfully sketches out what the totalitarian specter threatens.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, as Orwell himself had affirmed, the novel was never intended as a prophecy, but rather a warning that “totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.”⁹⁵ By choosing internal focalization through a single character for the entire novel, the writer created a powerful cautionary tale that vividly illustrates the repercussions of allowing governments absolute authority for a common citizen, thus making the story beyond relatable.

Chapter 4 – the Role of the Narrator in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*

4.1 *Never Let Me Go*: Historical Context and General Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro (born November 8, 1954) is a Japanese-born British novelist. The writer moved to England with his family when he was six years old. He studied English and philosophy at Kent University, and creative writing at the University of East Anglia, graduating in 1980.⁹⁶ Raised in England by Japanese parents, Ishiguro struggled with feelings of being a “homeless writer,” of lacking a natural constituency or audience, of being neither “very English” nor “very Japanese.”⁹⁷ His bicultural upbringing probably accounts for his different perspectives and unique approach to writing. Author of numerous world-famous novels and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Ishiguro is best known for his historical novels featuring ordinary characters. Even though the

⁹⁴ Rodden and Rossi, *The Cambridge Introduction to George Orwell*, 4.

⁹⁵ Dorian Lynskey, *The Ministry of Truth: The Biography of George Orwell’s 1984* (New York: Doubleday, 2019), 192.

⁹⁶ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 2.

⁹⁷ Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 2.

writer frequently deals with significant social issues in his works, he is more interested in exploring psychological concerns rather than providing historical details. Brian Shaffer has commented on the style of Ishiguro's writing:

The author is more a novelist of the inner character than of the outer world. To be sure, these novels readily engage historical and political realities, but history and politics are explored primarily in order to plumb the depths and shallows of the characters' emotional and psychological landscapes and only secondarily to explore, say, World War Two, Japanese fascism, or the English class system.⁹⁸

Another distinct feature of Ishiguro's writing is that all of his novels and short stories are told from the first-person perspective. The writer likes to follow his protagonists' "thoughts around, as they try to trip themselves up or to hide from themselves."⁹⁹ *Never Let Me Go*, one of Ishiguro's most renowned novels, is a perfect example of a novel centered around the protagonist's life experiences and her recollections of the past.

The novel is set in dystopian England of late 1990s. It depicts a society where human cloning is made possible and is used to save or prolong the lives of ordinary people. Clones, therefore, are expected to donate their organs when they reach adulthood, frequently going through as many as four or five donations before they finally "complete." Even though the novel clearly has features of a technological dystopia, the premise of the creation of human clones and the science behind it are not explored at all. Although *Never Let Me Go* may be read as a cautionary tale regarding the abuse of science and technology on humans and their civil rights, it is, paradoxically, "a story in which science and technology are conspicuously absent."¹⁰⁰ The text focuses on the characters rather than the dystopian world, diving into their psychological struggles and hardships and presenting them as actual individuals with their own experiences and emotions.

⁹⁸ Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 8.

⁹⁹ Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Karl Shaddox, "Generic Considerations in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Human Rights Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2013): 449, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24518023>.

The story revolves around three friends who grow up together: Kathy H, Ruth, and Tommy, all of whom are human clones. They live in a world where clones are considered to be soulless organ providers as opposed to the “normal” people, and only a very small portion of the population are willing to see them as individuals. By concentrating on the protagonists’ life stories, experiences, and ordeals, the novel aims to expose the moral and ethical wrongness of creating clones destined to donate their organs and die at a young age. Karl Shaddox has remarked: “The message of the novel, human clones are fully human and so should not be treated as animals on the hoof, is not argued or debated; rather, it is rendered by the readers’ own affective resonance with Kathy and the other clones’ emotional lives.”¹⁰¹ Consequently, the text virtually allows the readers into the mind of the protagonist and narrates Kathy’s life story through her own eyes, hence illustrating that she and the other clones all have personalities and intelligence. This is achieved with the help of the first-person narration from the perspective of one of the clones.

4.2 The Narrative Situation in *Never Let Me Go*

The entire text is presented from Kathy’s perspective as she goes down the memory lane and reminisces about her life: the childhood years spent in Hailsham, her adolescence at the Cottages, and finally her working as a carer. The narration is, therefore, non-linear because it begins when Kathy is thirty-one and the majority of the novel consists of numerous bits of her memories and experiences from her entire life. The text utilizes many of the techniques of the autobiographical memoir, while “simultaneously barring itself from classification as an example of this genre.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Shaddox, “Generic Considerations,” 450.

¹⁰² Keith McDonald, “Days of Past Futures: Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* as ‘Speculative Memoir’,” *Biography* 30, no.1 (2007): 75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23540599>.

According to Fludernik, most first-person narratives are pseudo-autobiographies¹⁰³ that present the reader with the so-called narrating self and the experiencing self:

An interesting aspect of fictional first-person narratives is that the focus can be either on the so-called *narrating self* or the *experiencing self*. For instance, when events and actions are reported from the perspective of a now older and wiser narrator, this narrating self often indulges in retrospection, evaluation and the drawing of moral conclusions. Conversely, the text may eschew retrospection and concentrate on the action as it takes place, at any one particular moment in time. In such cases, the focus is on the narrator as protagonist, the experiencing self.¹⁰⁴

This is precisely what one can observe in Ishiguro's novel: the narration frequently switches between adult Kathy (the narrating self) and Kathy as a child and teenager (the experiencing selves). Since the novel features the form of narration in which the protagonist is simultaneously the narrator telling her own story, it can be defined as autodiegetic narrative¹⁰⁵ with internal focalization, in Genette's terminology. This type of narrative is usually entirely subjective, and may even be "too personal and seemingly too confined to encompass without improbability a narrative content widely overflowing that experience."¹⁰⁶ Autodiegetic narration does not allow for an objective representation of the fictional world, which is normally crucial for a dystopia, but this is not an issue for *Never Let Me Go* because it aims to explore the character and her subjective experience rather than describe and explain the dystopian setting. By giving the readers access to Kathy's perspective and her thoughts, the novel attempts to help the reader comprehend that the clones are no less than humans in terms of their feelings and personalities, thus emphasizing the immorality of human cloning in the first place.

¹⁰³ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 90.

¹⁰⁴ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 90.

¹⁰⁵ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 247.

¹⁰⁶ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 250.

4.3 Kathy H as an Unreliable Narrator

An essential aspect of the narrative situation in *Never Let Me Go* is Kathy's potential unreliability. The novel features the narrating self that looks back on her life, trying to remember her childhood experiences from decades ago. As a consequence, her recollection of the past can hardly be entirely accurate, and the text frequently emphasizes the fact that the narrator's memory may be faulty, by notes such as "or maybe I'm remembering it wrong,"¹⁰⁷ or "this was all a long time ago so I might have some of it wrong."¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Kathy may not only struggle to remember certain details, but she may also get some memories mixed up, perhaps even repressing some negative experiences completely: "The earlier years – the ones I've just been telling you about – they tend to blur into each other as a kind of golden time, and when I think about them at all, even the not-so-great things, I can't help feeling a sort of glow."¹⁰⁹ All of these phenomena result in the reader's questioning Kathy's story and her perception of things and in realization that it is necessary to read between the lines.

With that in mind, the narrator does not seem to intend to deceive the reader. Speaking about his choice of narrating persona, Ishiguro himself stresses the "distinctness of Kathy's sincere voice from that of the untrustworthy, 'self-deceiving' narrators of his earlier works."¹¹⁰ Surprisingly, this type of narration has another effect: it makes Kathy seem just as human and imperfect as any "normal" person who tends to forget many aspects of their past, confuse the facts, or choose to hold on to specific memories only. Elke D'hoker has asserted that Kathy's style of narration demonstrates "certain aspects of the human mind that have fascinated Ishiguro from the

¹⁰⁷ Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Waterville, Maine: Thorndike Press, 2005), 19.

¹⁰⁸ Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 132.

¹¹⁰ Wojciech Drag, *Revisiting Loss: Memory, Trauma and Nostalgia in the Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2014), 164.

start: the fabrication of soothing stories to mediate an all too harsh reality, the avoidance or negation of traumatic events, the capriciousness of memory and the need to justify and rationalise one's behaviour."¹¹¹ Likewise, Kathy sometimes admits that she may have misread another character's reaction, or that her friends have a different recollection of the same event. Since the novel is limited to the protagonist's perspective, the reader can never verify which version is accurate. This enhances the great subjectivity of her narration, creating the effect of an autobiography.

4.4 Metatextual Elements in the Novel: *Never Let Me Go* as an Autobiography

Written entirely from Kathy's perspective and focusing solely on her life, the novel reads as a sort of autobiography. As was mentioned above, the novel features the autodiegetic type of narration and high subjectivity. In addition to this, the narrator assumes that the readers are already familiar with her world and that they will not have trouble understanding what she refers to: "My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year."¹¹² In fact, the reader cannot know what being a "carer" in Kathy's world entails, or why eleven years is an unusually long time to be one. D'hoker has analyzed that the narration is addressed to another clone, which in turn emphasizes the distance between narratee and reader, corresponding to the quite considerable distance between narrator and reader.¹¹³ According to Fludernik, the narratee is

the intrafictional addressee of the narrator's discourse. S/he may also be a fictional character: the narrator tells the story to a friend, for instance, in other words to someone

¹¹¹ Elke D'hoker, "Unreliability between Mimesis and Metaphor: The Works of Kazuo Ishiguro," in *Narrative Unreliability in the Twentieth-Century First-Person Novel*, ed. Elke D'hoker, and Gunther Martens (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 164.

¹¹² Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 11.

¹¹³ D'hoker, "Unreliability between Mimesis and Metaphor," 164.

who belongs, just as the narrator does, to the fictional world even though this person is not active on the plot level and exists only “offstage.”¹¹⁴

The implied narratee may be identified several times throughout the novel. For instance, as adult Kathy, the narrating self, describes Hailsham, she says: “I don’t know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we had to have some form of medical almost every week [...]”¹¹⁵ The narrator seems to believe that the reader is another clone who grew up in a similar institution like she did. Although meta-referencing is a common feature of autobiographies,¹¹⁶ in the case of *Never Let Me Go*, which is only a pseudo-autobiography, this technique serves a special purpose. In addressing the implied reader, the novel draws attention to itself as a construction, enhancing the illusion that it is the narrator telling this story, and that the reader acknowledges the authenticity of the narrative, thus entirely distancing Ishiguro from the writing process.¹¹⁷ This contributes to the credibility of the text, encouraging greater involvement of the reader in the story and evoking readers’ sympathy for Kathy, as well as the rest of the human clones. Keith McDonald has noted:

A paradoxical situation occurs in the case of *Never Let Me Go*. In drawing attention to the artificiality of the work – that is, letting the reader know that she is aware of the reader/writer exchange, rather than creating an apparently seamless fiction – Kathy H is re-enforcing the notion that this is an autobiographical account of events, and stamping her authentic authorial voice upon the work.¹¹⁸

All of this results in the fact that the novel reads as a genuine autobiography, the “author” of which is highly relatable. Consequently, the reader’s attention is drawn to the clones’ inferior position in the society, the injustice that they have to face, and the immorality of having to give up their lives for the sake of “normal” humans.

¹¹⁴ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 23.

¹¹⁵ Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 27.

¹¹⁶ McDonald, “Days of Past Futures,” 79.

¹¹⁷ McDonald, “Days of Past Futures,” 79.

¹¹⁸ McDonald, “Days of Past Futures,” 79.

4.5 Kathy's Narrative: Dignifying the Clones and Denouncing the System

In Ishiguro's alternative England, human clones are created "entirely for the purposes of organ harvesting once they reach maturity."¹¹⁹ Referred to as "students," the clones are meant to grow up in special institutions, isolated from the rest of the society. The students have no parents or families and they cannot have children; they only have each other and the "guardians" (the teachers at Hailsham) to interact with. McDonald has observed that Kathy has to live in a world "that goes so far as to disenfranchise her from the human mass, where she is reduced to a cog in a bioconsumerist culture."¹²⁰

Despite all this, the protagonist never complains about the unfairness of her existence, being grateful to have grown up at Hailsham, because the other institutions for clones are evidently far worse. Bruce Robbins has commented on the nature of Kathy's perspective: "We look at the world through the eyes of a character of limited consciousness, immersed in concerns and anxieties that one cannot confidently call trivial, who prefers not to contemplate the Big Picture."¹²¹ Regardless of Kathy's apparent reconciliation with her fate throughout most of the novel, she is still essentially a testament to the humanity of the clones. By recounting her experiences, she shows the readers that hers and the other students' lives are just as full of emotions, joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments. This is achieved with the help of numerous "memories" that the adult Kathy shares with the reader. The memories normally include her friends and other students in order to show that all the clones are equally endowed with personalities: "Didn't we all dream from time to time about one guardian or other bending the rules and doing something special for us? A

¹¹⁹ Anne Whitehead, "Writing with Care: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Contemporary Literature* 52, no. 1 (2011): 56, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41261825>.

¹²⁰ McDonald, "Days of Past Futures," 81.

¹²¹ Bruce Robbins, "Cruelty Is Bad: Banality and Proximity in *Never Let Me Go*," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 40, no. 3 (2007): 293, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40267704>.

spontaneous hug, a secret letter, a gift?”¹²² The quote reveals the students’ desire for a family, a parent figure, their need for human interaction, which is, nevertheless, denied as Hailsham rules discourage intimacy.

Human relations perhaps play the biggest role in *Never Let Me Go* as the writer uses them to illustrate that clones have emotions. Namely, the story focuses on Kathy’s friendship with Ruth, and her relationship with Tommy, the boy she loves, proving that clones are just as capable of deep affection as humans are:

Then he said: “I keep thinking about this river somewhere, with the water moving really fast. And these two people in the water, trying to hold onto each other, holding on as hard as they can, but in the end it’s just too much. The current’s too strong. They’ve got to let go, drift apart. That’s how it is with us. It’s a shame, Kath, because we’ve loved each other all our lives. But in the end, we can’t stay together forever.”¹²³

The passage depicts Tommy’s bitterness about his limited time with Kathy as he is about to have another donation. The deep feeling of despondency is prevalent in the second half of the novel since the characters are aware of what awaits them and yet unable to alter their fates. The reader is allowed to witness the unravelling of the protagonist’s life and experience her silent grief firsthand as her relationships are torn apart by the wider social responsibilities that she exists to fulfil.¹²⁴ Kathy is heartbroken at the end of the novel, having lost Ruth and Tommy and preparing for her first donation:

I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I’d ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it, and if I waited long enough, a tiny figure would appear on the horizon across the field, and gradually get larger until I’d see it was Tommy, and he’d wave, maybe even call. The fantasy never got beyond that – I didn’t let it – and though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn’t sobbing or out of control. I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be.¹²⁵

¹²² Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 104.

¹²³ Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 459.

¹²⁴ McDonald, “Days of Past Futures,” 80.

¹²⁵ Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 468.

Still, she is resigned to fulfil her “duty” as an organ donor since her attempt to defer the donations has failed. The text essentially demonstrates what it is like to be “the other” as opposed to the “normal” people, what the human clones have to endure and what they are forced to lose. Anne Whitehead has concluded that “the final section of the novel portrays Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth as loving and sensitive individuals, even if they are not accorded the status and rights of citizens within the dystopian political system that has brought them into being.”¹²⁶ Consequently, through Kathy’s perspective, the novel narrates a tragic story of how people’s lives can be broken by the unethical and merciless system that refuses to acknowledge them as actual humans.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyse three distinct dystopian novels in terms of the narrative strategies they employ. The narrative situations in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* were examined using Gerard Genette’s terminology. In order to determine the role of the narrators in the presentation of the dystopian worlds, the different types of focalization were discussed.

Brave New World, being a novel of themes and ideas, features zero focalization, since the story is told from the outside. The numerous central characters of the novel were not intended to be relatable or have developed and unique personalities, which is why having no dominant perspective throughout the entire text is effective in conveying Huxley’s message. The story revolves around the aspect of dehumanization, and the technological advancement’s corrupting human nature and morals. Impersonal narration therefore appropriately creates a distance between

¹²⁶ Whitehead, “Writing with Care,” 56.

the reader and the characters, whereas the omniscient narrator serves the purpose of explaining the workings of the futuristic world. The narrator also provides occasional insights into the protagonists' minds, generally exposing their flaws and lack of morality. Great emphasis is put on the role of technology and scientific progress in the World State, while the individual characters serve to demonstrate this world, rather than the world being there for them to merely reside in. By presenting multiple protagonists and still never allowing the readers to identify with any of them, Huxley makes it clear that the "utopia" of the World State is achieved at the expense of humanity.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, on the other hand, is an actorial novel, in which the personality and feelings of the protagonist play the key role. The novel features internal focalization, with the protagonist being the single focalizer, and there is no omniscient voice. The result of this type of narrative situation is the utter confinement of the reader's perception to that of Winston's. He is presented as a typical citizen of a totalitarian state, who attempts to rebel against the system and who ultimately fails. The reader's knowledge is highly restricted, and Winston's subjective impressions and opinions dominate the plot. Internal focalization takes the reader into the mind of the main character, describing all of his fears and struggles, and thus helping to comprehend the reality of living in Oceania. Establishing such a close identification with the protagonist results in the reader's sympathy for him, which in turn emphasizes Orwell's representation of totalitarian governments as the ultimate evil. Unlike *Brave New World*, the detailed descriptions of the dystopian world are less significant than the actual portrayal of living in it. Limiting the focalization to the protagonist's perspective thereby proves highly effective in reproducing what life feels like in Oceania for an everyman.

As for *Never Let Me Go*, the novel differs from the previous two in the way that it features an autodiegetic narrative with internal focalization. Written as a pseudo-autobiography, the novel

puts an even greater emphasis on the protagonist and her personal experiences, rather than the dystopian world she lives in. The profoundly subjective narration shifts the entire focus of the text to a single character, exploring her personality and vision of the world. The complete lack of objectivity could be problematic for a dystopia, where the reader needs to have a basic understanding of the fictional world at least, but Ishiguro chooses not to concentrate on the details of Kathy's world, emphasizing the clone's life in it instead. The type of focalization that the writer adopts allows him to communicate the fundamental idea of the novel: human clones have feelings and personalities too. By giving the readers access to Kathy's perspective and her thoughts, the novel attempts to help the reader comprehend that the clones are no less than human, thus emphasizing the immorality of human cloning in the first place.

Consequently, one can observe that the three novels are profoundly different in terms of the ideas they aim to convey and the narrative strategies they utilize to express those messages. The chosen focus, methodology, and selection of primary texts have proved useful and efficient in terms of allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the role of the narrators in British dystopian novels. Dystopias are first and foremost cautionary tales, meant to educate the readers and warn them of specific alarming tendencies and their consequences. At the same time, the literary value of the selected dystopian texts cannot be disputed: if they were merely pieces of activism, they would be very short-lived and easy to discredit. Their literary skill is precisely what makes these works stand as literature, allowing them to be efficient in terms of the social and political dimension. Enlightening the readers and potentially causing them to alter their actions and attitudes are highly ambitious tasks. Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and Kazuo Ishiguro all manage to employ the narrative techniques to their advantage, which makes their novels much more powerful

and successful in relating their ideas. To this day, the novels continue to inspire new interpretations and adaptations, which is another proof of their influence and viability.

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